



Pushing the Limits of Persistence Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

To persist is to endure. To last over time - even against the odds. Examples are everywhere: A persistent person weathers physical, emotional, or environmental setbacks and keeps trying. Elements that persist in the world around us connect us to a certain place, to an event, or to our past. We can read history in canyons carved by unstoppable rivers. Enduring artifacts and memories can wrench or lift our hearts. Put simply, PERSISTENCE expands the human experience in myriad ways.

Into Thin Air

Jon Krakauer, Nonfiction. A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more - including Krakauer's - in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster. - goodreads.com

- Are you a climber? How are your experiences reflected in this text? How are they not reflected?
- How would you feel about a loved one who was passionate about climbing, who felt the pull toward Everest or K2? Would you encourage him/her to pursue the dream...or be more mindful of leaving behind families should something happen?
- Krakauer describes any attempt to climb Mt. Everest as "an intrinsically irrational act". Do you agree with this statement? Why do we as humans persist in taking on such challenges?
- What do you think about the decision to leave Beck Weathers and Yasuko Namba to die, knowing both were still alive? What do you think you would have done in that situation? Is the human will to survive a kind of persistence?

